



Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of)	
)	
Broadband Industry Practices)	
Notice of Inquiry)	WC Docket No. 07-52
)	
)	
February 21, 2008)	

Comments of the US Distance Learning Association

Prepared by:

John G. Flores, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer
US Distance Learning Association
8 Winter Street, Suite 508
Boston, MA 02108

T: 800.275.5162
F: 617.399.1771

The United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) was founded on the premise of creating a powerful alliance to meet the burgeoning education and training needs of learning communities via new concepts of the fusion of communication technologies with learning in broad multidiscipline applications.

Distance learning is used in all areas of education including Pre-K through grade 12, higher education, home school education, continuing education, corporate training, military and government training, and telemedicine. In addition USDLA is also focused on national and international technology based Distance Learning. It has flourished and expanded due to major

advancements in technology, most notably the creation and development of the internet.

8 Winter Street, Suite 508 · Boston, MA 02108-4705
Telephone: 800.275.5162 Fax: 617.339.1771
Website: www.usdla.org

Thus, as the nation's leading advocate for distance learning programs, USDLA has a responsibility to the community it represents to monitor legislative and regulatory proposals at all levels of government that may have an impact on the continued growth of the Distance Learning industry. We are interested in current debates surrounding federal and state telecommunications reform with both encouragement and concern.

High-tech communication tools such as broadband Internet have changed the face of education forever. Whether as a replacement or complement to traditional classroom instruction, broadband technologies have promoted educational growth. USDLA is committed to ensuring learning communities of unfettered, affordable access to these tools. For that reason USDLA wishes to advise lawmakers to avoid legislative and regulatory proposals that will jeopardize investment in the development and deployment of broadband networks.

USDLA strongly believes the Internet has become the powerful tool it is today because of governmental freedom and flexibility. This has allowed private industry the opportunity to invest, develop and deploy new technologies and capabilities at an unprecedented pace. Many of those technologies are what allow people of all ages to continue learning, be it for academic, professional or personal growth. Trying to legislatively dictate the Internet's future is a potentially dangerous strategy that could prevent it from reaching its full potential. This is especially true at the state level. Moreover, USDLA maintains that to keep these networks running properly and efficiently, private industry – who created and invested in these networks – is the appropriate manager of the network it constructed. These companies' business is to operate and manage the flow of information on their networks to keep customers pleased with performance. It is in their best interest to employ techniques that will ensure a positive experience online.

The USDLA feels that the benefits afforded to people of all states is rooted in the continued deployment of broadband access we have witnessed over the last decade; not in legislating against activity that might occur sometime in the unforeseen future. Ensuring all users of the Internet have fair and expeditious access to available distance learning content is a goal of the USDLA. It is not a pursuit exclusive to government. Investment in current

and future broadband networks is in the billions of dollars, making every life-long learner, one of increasing importance. It is in new services for the learner, that companies will be able to recoup their investment and hopefully reinvest it in greater deployment of distance learning opportunities. Any regulations enacted on the industry would lessen the incentive for the telecommunications industry to invest in the next generation of communications services.

In closing, access to educational opportunities through distance learning technologies is and will continue to be a great equalizer in our society. USDLA supports the industry's use of network management tools to guarantee the continued and rapid deployment of broadband to all Americans as well as to stimulate additional technologies. We believe allowing the industry to dictate best practices for managing networks will encourage the Telecom industry to continue its pioneering and investment efforts in making distance learning opportunities available to everyone. This position supports and helps fulfill the mission of USDLA for its many constituencies. More importantly however, this position is paramount for all lifelong learners of all ages in the United States of America.

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